

RECOGNIZING WASHINGTON
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

HON. ASA HUTCHINSON

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Hospital Week and applaud the efforts of our nation's hospitals. In particular, I want to call attention to the Washington Regional Medical Center, and its efforts to serve the community.

Washington Regional—located in Fayetteville, Arkansas—has recently been awarded the 1999 NOVA award by the American Hospital Association. This award recognizes hospitals for their initiatives for and interaction with the local community. This year, Washington Regional is a recipient of the NOVA award for its commitment to the children of Washington County.

Many community ills occur due to circumstances that are beyond an individual's control. Unfortunately, many of these problems result in chronic disease, disability and often death. Washington Regional is working to reverse that trend through the Kids for Health program. Through this program, the medical center partners with the Washington County school system to teach more than 8,000 children about self-esteem, general health, nutrition, fitness, hygiene, and safety.

The Kids for Health program is so successful that it received a five-year grant from the Harvey and Beatrice Jones Charitable Foundation. This critical program is proving that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and proud to recognize the Washington Regional Medical Center for its achievements. It is a stellar example of a hospital that makes a difference in its community.

PROVIDING WIC BENEFITS TO
OVERSEAS MILITARY PERSONNEL

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will put an end to unfair treatment of military personnel stationed overseas and their families. These dedicated personnel who are performing invaluable service to the nation, along with their families, are currently ineligible for supplemental nutrition services which we provide for other citizens.

The Department of Defense estimates that 46,658 women, infants, and children are currently denied benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). That means that military personnel and their families, to whom our nation owes substantial gratitude, are being treated as second-class citizens. They are denied basic services which would be available to them had they not volunteered to serve their country.

As a nation, we are better than that. We are already asking men and women who serve in the military to make significant sacrifices. Those sacrifices should not include the health and well being of their families.

Since its inception, we have seen very clear evidence that participation in WIC has reduced the number of low birthweight babies and birth defects caused by poor nutrition during pregnancy. In addition, the nutritional supplements received by infants and young children help prevent health problems related to poor nutrition. This small investment in nutritional assistance for individual participants saves our country a great deal in health care costs and costs related to special education services.

The WIC program also includes an education component which is key to the program's success. These nutrition and education benefits should be available to all U.S. citizens, regardless of where they are residing.

Present law authorizes the Secretary of Defense to carry out a program similar to WIC to provide special supplemental food benefits to military personnel overseas. However, current law relies heavily on the transfer of funds and commodities from the Secretary of Agriculture to operate this program. These funds have never been made available. Therefore, the legislation I am introducing today would call on the Secretary of Defense to use funds available for the Department of Defense to carry out this program. It would also require the Department of Agriculture to provide technical assistance to the Department of Defense to insure program quality.

Mr. Speaker, I believe very strongly that our military personnel overseas should have access to the same nutritional support as families residing in the United States. My legislation would enable the Department of Defense to provide these services. I would encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, which insures that our overseas military personnel and their families reap the same benefits from program participation.

TRIBUTE TO MARTIN L. VINGER
OF DODGEVILLE, WISCONSIN

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize World War I veteran Martin L. Vinger, of Dodgeville, Wisconsin. Mr. Vinger has been recognized by the French government in solemn tribute to his World War I service. He valiantly served on French soil to aid in the liberation of France, and for his service he has been awarded The National Order of the Legion of Honor, the highest military honor that can be bestowed upon non-French soldiers.

With an extraordinary sense of dedication and commitment, Mr. Vinger enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 11, 1918 at the age of sixteen. He then departed for France in July of that year. He returned to the United States in February, 1919 and was discharged the following month.

At the time of his award, Mr. Vinger stated from his own wartime experiences that we Americans today must remember to keep our democracy alive, "because if we lose it, it will be a long time getting it back." One can only imagine what a different world we might be living in today had not Mr. Vinger and other brave young men and women served on the many fronts of the "war to end all wars." It is

with sincere gratitude and the utmost respect that I rise today to ask that the Congress of the United States join with me in recognizing the selfless service of Mr. Martin L. Vinger.

A TRIBUTE TO DON KINGSTON

HON. DAVID D. PHELPS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Don Kingston, who is retiring this year from Eldorado High School in Eldorado, Illinois. Donald J. Kingston was born on October 28, 1931, one of eight children. His father passed away when he was just four years old leaving his mother with eight children during the Depression. Don felt strongly that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Programs were instrumental in pulling his family through the hard times. He also believes that the sports programs in his local high school were the only reason he completed high school, a very revealing fact when you look at how dedicated he has been to EHS sports over the last forty years.

Back in the fall of 1956, while in his last year of law school, EHS head football coach Coach Adams, asked Don to be assistant coach for the EHS football team. Instead of going on to practice law, Don accepted the assistant coaching job. A year later when Coach Adams retired, Don became the head coach of the football team. Don Kingston has given the last forty-two years of his life to being both an outstanding educator and coach at Eldorado High School. Mr. Kingston has taught many subjects at Eldorado High School, including physical education, driver's education, English and geography. Mr. Kingston has also coached the football, basketball and track teams. The best teams he has ever coached, according to Don, were the 1968 Eagles Football Team and the 1976 Eagles Basketball Team, of which his son Kevin was a member.

Mr. Speaker, what is most special about my opportunity now to congratulate Don and his wife Wanda, is the fact that I have known them all of my life and truly appreciate their commitment to public service. They raised two wonderful children; Kevin and Valerie, who have served as role models to the community, and I know that if Kevin were still with us today he would be proud to see his father reach this stage in his life. Don has been my teacher, my fellow elected official, my supporter, professional colleague, but most importantly, my friend! Don, we wish you God's speed and congratulations on a fabulous career in shaping the lives of our young people.

FREMONT'S IRVINGTON HIGH
SCHOOL NAMED 1999 DISTINGUISHED
SCHOOL BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Fremont's Irvington High School. The

California Department of Education has named Irvington as a 1999 Distinguished School—the most prestigious award they bestow.

Consideration for this award does not come lightly. The California Department of Education uses a rigorous aggressive application model, which requires schools to be exemplary in their field. Irvington is a magnet school for the visual and performing arts, and currently 1,800 students are in attendance.

Irvington High School should also be very proud of its cutting edge requirement that students complete 40 hours of service learning, or community service, in order to graduate. Programs such as these are what make Irvington stand out from the rest.

I commend the faculty and students of Irvington High School for their dedication to excellence, and I congratulate them.

IN MEMORY OF JONATHAN
PATRICK BIGONY II

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in happy memory of the late Jonathan Patrick Bigony II, on the third anniversary of his birth, which occurred on June 8, 1996. Blue-eyed with black, curly hair and a radiant smile, Jonathan was known as “J.P.” to his friends, yet to his four devoted uncles in the DiGregory Family, he was affectionately nicknamed “Tater.” He loved to laugh at the kitchen table with his Uncle Billy, to watch his Uncle Jimmy working in the garden, to play with his Uncle Johnny, and to watch his Uncle Dominic prepare detailed meals as a chef. Among J.P.’s first words were the names of his uncles.

As high spirited and good-natured as he was handsome, J.P. was a delight to those who met him. Whenever carrying him on their shoulders, his friends and family were prepared for J.P. to flip over backwards in laughter. He was the loving son of Jonathan and Marysanta Bigony of Bowie, Maryland, and was the younger brother of J.R. Bigony. J.R. and J.P. dearly loved each other, and the two boys enjoyed laughing together, day and night. Jonathan’s loving Godparents were his friend, Patty Lowe, and his Uncle Dominic.

Nothing fascinated J.P. more than when he looked up on a roof one beautiful morning in May, 1997, and saw his uncles doing carpentry together with his friend, Raymond Lowe. From the high rafters, his beloved Uncle Johnny waved to him and his much-loved Uncle Jimmy called out an enthusiastic, “Tater!” And Jonathan, only 11 months old, fearlessly tried to climb the ladder to be with them. He knew what it meant to be loved.

Jonathan enjoyed many of his adventures in the company of his totally dedicated grandmother, Mrs. Dorothy McNamara DiGregory, whom he adored and who cleverly fashioned a safety-seat for him on her golf cart, so that he could accompany her during her strenuous work hours around the expansive family property. J.P. loved the outdoors, and he enjoyed helping her to do carpentry, to feed the horses and dog, to work in the garden, to landscape the lawns, and to trim branches along the creek.

Jonathan also enjoyed playing games with his loving grandmother, Mrs. Gertrude Bigony, of York, Pennsylvania, and with his cousins, Leigha and Danielle DiGregory. One of his earliest sentences was, “Hi, Leigha! How ya doing?”

In honor of the anniversary of Jonathan’s birthday, it is a privilege to pay tribute to a wonderful child who brought so much joy. Today, the memories endure of a smiling J.P., enjoying cookies with his grandmother, snuggling on his devoted mother’s shoulder, and beaming down happily from his Uncle Johnny’s strong arms.

EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICES ACCESS ASSURANCE ACT OF 1999

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues, Representative Ed TOWNS and Representative JO ANN EMERSON, in introducing H.R. 1777, the Emergency Ambulance Services Assurance Act of 1999. This legislation will ensure that health care plans reimburse for emergency ambulance services when individuals had every reason to believe that they were experiencing an extremely serious condition requiring immediate emergency care.

Some may ask why we are introducing this legislation when all of the major managed care reform bills that have been introduced in Congress already include emergency care provisions. But the fact is, these bills cover only what happens when the patient enters the emergency room. None of the bills ensures coverage for emergency ambulance services. It is our hope to use this separate bill to highlight this omission and to build support for including emergency ambulance services coverage in more comprehensive managed care reform proposals that may be moving through the legislative process.

This legislation would ensure that individuals suffering what they had every reason to assume to be a potentially life-threatening condition requiring immediate medical attention or their family or caretakers don’t have to phone their insurance plan before they call for an ambulance and don’t have to worry about paying for the ambulance services should the condition later prove to be not as serious as the patient thought.

TAX SIMPLIFICATION AND
BURDEN REDUCTION ACT

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, Congress can take great pride in changes we have made in tax law in recent years for small businesses, families and middle income Americans. Unfortunately, we cannot claim to have reduced the complexity of the tax code. A simple Constitutional amendment ratified in 1913 runs to 32 words: “The Congress shall have

the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.” The Revenue Act of 1913 which enacted the income tax was 15 pages long.

The copy of the Internal Revenue Code on the bookshelf in my office is printed on the tissue thin paper. It covers over 2300 pages. The regulations springing from the code fill many volumes. The court cases would fill a library.

Is it any wonder that 66 percent of respondents in a recent Associated Press poll said that the federal tax system is too complicated? The same poll showed that over half of those surveyed, 56 percent, pay someone else to complete their returns. When you consider that only 30 percent of taxpayers itemize, that is a good number of people who are paying someone else to fill out 1040s and 1040EZs. Something is wrong when so many taxpayers with relatively straightforward returns lack confidence in their ability to fill out a 1040 or a 1040EZ.

At the beginning of this year, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight heard from the Taxpayer Advocate in its first hearing of the 106th Congress. The Advocate presented some 39 legislative proposals for improving service or reducing the compliance burden. He told us that his recommendations came from a “groundswell of casework.”

Later this month, the Oversight Subcommittee will hold a hearing on the need to simplify the tax code and reduce the compliance burden. I look forward to hearing from Treasury and from several professional organizations, also from practitioners who work in the field every day trying to help working men and women comply with our tax laws.

In the meantime, I am in the process of drafting legislation (The Tax Simplification and Burden Reduction Act). It includes several of the Advocate’s recommendations, proposals developed by the Tax Section of the American Bar Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, also suggestions I have received from the people of New York’s 31st Congressional District and from people across the United States who have written to the Subcommittee on Oversight.

My bill would include the following provisions:

Eliminate nonrefundable credits as adjustments to regular taxable income in calculating alternative minimum taxable income. No one should have to pay the alternative minimum tax (AMT) simply because he or she claimed a child credit or HOPE scholarship credit.

Exempt taxpayers from the AMT if their modified adjusted gross income is below a middle-income threshold (\$85,000 for individuals, \$120,000 for married, filing jointly). The AMT was never intended to penalize middle-income taxpayers who aren’t using loopholes in the tax code.

Increase the AMT gross receipts exemption for small businesses from \$7,500,000 to \$10,000,000. By the same token, the AMT is an unnecessary and extraordinary burden for many small businesses.

Replace the current individual capital gains tax regime with a simple 50 percent deduction from gross income. The current form is 54 lines long and according to the Treasury Department takes an average of 6 hours and 41 minutes to complete. Many taxpayers have to